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the little river which divides it from the castle, the picturesque of its situation is such as the painter must look at with feelings of admiration and delight. It has also its historical legend to give it additional interest; and unfortunately this legend, though quite in harmony with the lone and melancholy features of the scene, is but too characteristic of the unhappy social and political state of Ireland at the period to which it relates—the most unfortunate period, as it may be emphatically called, of Ireland's history—that of the civil wars in the middle of the seventeenth century. The principle, however, which we propose to ourselves in the conducting of our publication, will not permit us to give this legend a place in its pages; it may be learned on the spot; and we have only alluded to it here, in order to state that it is to the religious veneration kept alive by this tradition that the yew tree of Aughnagure owes its preservation from the fate which has overtaken all its original companions.

The Castle of Aughnagure, though greatly dilapidated by time, and probably still more so by the great hurricane of last year, is still in sufficient preservation to convey to those who may examine its ruins a vivid impression of the domestic habits and peculiar household economy of an old Irish chief of nearly the highest rank. His house, a strong and lofty tower, stands in an ample court-yard, surrounded by out-works perforated with shot-holes, and only accessible through its drawbridge gateway-tower. The river, which conveyed his boats to the adjacent lake, and supplied his table with the luxuries of trout and salmon, washes the rock on which its walls are raised, and forms a little harbour within them. Cellars, bake-houses, and houses for the accommodation of his numerous followers, are also to be seen; and an appendage not usually found in connection with such fortresses also appears, namely, a spacious banquetting-hall for the revels of peaceful times, the ample windows of which exhibit a style of architecture of no small elegance of design and execution.

We shall probably in some early number of our Journal give a genealogical account of the noble family to whom this castle belonged; but in the mean time it may be satisfactory to the reader to give him an idea of the class of persons by whom the chief was attended, and who occasionally required accommodation in his mansion. They are thus enumerated in an ancient manuscript preserved in the College Library:—O'Canavan, his physician; Mac Gillegannan, chief of the horse; O'Colgan, his standard-bearer; Mac Kinnon and O'Mulavill, his brehons, or judges; the O'Duvans, his attendants on ordinary visitings; Mac Gille-Kelly, his ollave in genealogy and poetry; Mac Beolain, his keeper of the black bell of St Patrick; O'Donnell, his master of revels; O'Kicherain and O'Conlactna, the keepers of his bees; O'Murgaile, his chief steward, or collector of his revenues.

The date of the erection of this castle is not exactly known, though it was originally inscribed on a stone over its entrance gateway, which existed in the last century. From the style of its architecture, however, it may be assigned with sufficient certainty to the middle of the sixteenth century, with the exception, perhaps, of the banquetting-hall, which appears to be of a somewhat later age.

While the town of Galway was besieged in 1651 by the parliamentary forces under the command of Sir Charles Coote, the Castle of Aughnagure afforded protection to the Lord Deputy the Marquess of Clanricarde, until the successes of his adversaries forced him and many other nobles to seek safety in the more distant wilds of Connemara. This event is thus stated by the learned Roderick O'Flaherty in 1683:—

"Anno 1651.—Among the many strange and rare vicissitudes of our own present age, the Marquis of Clanricarde, Lord Deputy of Ireland, the Earl of Castlehaven, and Earl of Clancarty, driven out of the rest of Ireland, were entertained, as they landed on the west shore of this lake for a night's lodging, under the mean roof of Mortough Boy Branhagh, an honest farmer's house, the same year wherein the most potent monarch of Great Britain, our present sovereign, bowed his imperial triple crown under the boughs of an oak tree, where his life depended on the shade of the tree leaves."

There are several of the official letters of the Marquis preserved in his Memoirs, dated from Aughnagure, and written during the stormy period of which we have made mention.

The Castle of Aughnagure has passed from the family to whom it originally belonged; but the representative and the chief of his name, Henry Parker O'Flaherty, Esq. of Lemonfield, a descendant in the female line from the celebrated Grania Waille, still possesses a good estate in its vicinity. P.

## THE IRISH IN ENGLAND.

NO. I.—THE WASHERWOMAN.

BY MRS S. C. HALL.

THE only regular washerwomen extant in England at this present moment, are natives of the Emerald Isle.

We have—I pray you observe the distinction, gentle reader—laundresses in abundance. But washerwomen!—all the washerwomen are Irish.

The Irish Washerwoman promises to wash the muslin curtains as white as a hound's tooth, and as sweet as "new mown hay;" and she tells the truth. But when she promises to "get them up" as clear as a kitten's eyes, she tells a story. In nine cases out of ten, the Irish Washerwoman mars her own admirable washing by a carelessness in the "getting up." She makes her starch in a hurry, though it requires the most patient blending, the most incessant stirring, the most constant boiling, and the cleanest of all skillits; and she will not understand the superiority of powder over stone blue, but snatches the blue-bag (originally compounded from the "heel" or "toe" of a stocking) out of the half-broken tea-cup, where it lay companioning a lump of yellow soap since last wash—squeezes it into the starch (which, *perhaps*, she has been heedless enough to stir with a dirty spoon), and then there is no possibility of clear curtains, clear point, clear any thing.

"Biddy, these curtains were as white as snow before you starched them."

"Thru for ye, ma'am dear."

"They are blue now, Biddy."

"Not all out."

"No, Biddy, not all over—only here and there."

"Ah, lave off, ma'am, honey, will ye?—'tisn't that I mane; but there's a hole worked in the blue-rag, bad luck to it, and more blue nor is wanting gets out; and the weary's in the starch, it got lumpy."

"It could not have got 'lumpy' if it had been well blended."

"It was blended like butther; but I just left off stirring one minute to look at the soldiers."

"Ah, Biddy, an English laundress would not 'run after the soldiers'!"

Such an observation is sure to offend Biddy's propriety, and she goes off in a "huff," muttering that if they didn't go "look after them, they'd skulk after them; it's the London Blacks does the mischief, and the mistress ought to know that herself. English laundresses indeed! they haven't power in their elbow to wash white."

Biddy says all this, and more, for she is a stickler for the honour of her country, and wonders that I should prefer any thing English to every thing Irish. But the fact remains the same.

The actual labour necessary at the wash-tub is far better performed by the Irish than the English; but the order, neatness, and exactness required in "the getting up," is better accomplished by the English than the Irish. This is perfectly consistent with the national character of both countries.

Biddy Mahony is without exception the most useful person I know, and she knows it also; and yet it never makes her presuming. It is not only as a washerwoman that her talent shines forth: she gets through as much hard work as two women, though, as she says herself, "the mistress always finds fault with her finishing touches." There she stands, a fine-looking woman still, though not young; her large mouth ever ready with its smile; her features expressive of shrewd good humour; and her keen grey eyes alive and about, not resting for a moment, and withal cunning, if not keen; the borders of her cap are twice as deep as they need be, and flap untidily about her face; she wears a coloured handkerchief inside a dark blue spotted cotton gown, which wraps loosely in front, where it is confined by the string of her apron; her hands and wrists have a half-boiled appearance, which it is painful to look at—not that she uses as much soda as an English laundress, but she does not spare her personal exertions, and rubs most unmercifully. One bitter frosty day last winter, I saw Biddy standing near the laundry window, stitching away with great industry.

"What are you doing, Biddy?" "Oh, never heed me, ma'am, honey."

"Why, Biddy, what a state your left wrist is in!—it is positively bleeding; you have rubbed all the skin off." "And

ain't I going to put a skin on it?" she said, smiling through the tears which positive pain had drawn from her eyes, in spite of her efforts to conceal them, and showing me a double piece of wash leather which she was sewing together so as to cover the torn flesh. Now, was not that heroism? But Biddy is a heroine, without knowing it.

And in common with many others of her sex and country, her heroism is of that patient, self-denying character which "passeth show." She is uniformly patient—can bear an extraordinary quantity of abuse and unkindness, and knows quite well that to a certain degree she is in an enemy's country. Half the bad opinion of the "low Irish," as they are often insultingly termed, arises from old national prejudices; the other half is created by themselves, for many of them are provokingly uproarious, and altogether heedless of the manners and opinions of those among whom they live. This is not the case with Biddy; she has a great deal of what we are apt to call "cunning" in the poor, but which we genteelly denominate "tact" in the rich. While you imagine she is only pulling out the strings of her apron, she is all eye, ear, and understanding; she is watchful as a cat; and if she indulges in an *aside* jest, which sometimes never finds words, on the peculiarities of her employers, there is nothing very atrocious in the fact. Poor Biddy's betters do the same, and term it "badinage." It is not always that we judge the poor and rich by the same law.

With young servants the Irish Washerwoman is always a favourite: she is cheerful, tosses a cup to read a fortune in perfection, and not unfrequently, I am sorry to say, has half of a dirty torn pack of cards in her pocket for the same purpose. She sings at her work, and through the wreath of curling steam that winds from the upraised skylight of the laundry, comes some old time-honoured melody, that in an instant brings the scenes and sounds of Ireland around us. She will rend our hearts with the "Cruskeen laun," or "Gramachree," and then strike into "Garryowen" or "St Patrick's Day," with the ready transition of interest and feeling that belongs only to her country.

Old English servants regard the Irish Washerwoman with suspicion; they think she does too much for the money, that she gives "Missus" a bad habit; and yet they are ready enough to put their own "clothes" into the month's wash, and expect Biddy to "pass them through the tub;" a favour she is too wise to refuse.

Happily for the *menage* of our English houses, the temptation to thievery which must exist where, as in Dublin, servants are allowed what is termed "breakfast money," which means that they are not to eat of their employers' bread, but "find themselves," and which restriction, all who understand human nature know is the greatest possible inducement to picking and stealing; happily, I say, English servants have no temptation to steal the *necessaries* of life; they are fed and treated as human beings; and consequently there is not a tithe of the extravagance, the waste, the pilfering, which is to be met with in Irish kitchens.

For all this I blame the system rather than the servant; and it is quite odd how Biddy accommodates herself to every modification of system in every house she goes to. The only thing she cannot bear is to hear her country abused; even a jest at its expense will send the blood mounting to her cheek; and some years ago (for Biddy and I are old acquaintances) I used to tease her most unmercifully on that head. There is nothing elevates the Irish peasant so highly in my esteem as his earnest love for his country when absent from it. Your well-bred Irishman, in nine cases out of ten, looks disconcerted when you allude to his country, and with either a *brogue* or a *tone*, an oily, easy, musical swing of the voice, which is never lost, begs to inquire "how you knew he was Irish?" and has sometimes the audacity to remark, "that people cannot help their misfortunes."

But the peasant-born have none of this painful affectation. Hear Biddy when challenged as to her country: the questioner is a lady.

"Thru for ye, madam, I am Irish, sure, and my people before me, God be praised for it! I'd be long sorry to disgrace my country, my lady. Fine men and women stays in it and comes out of it, the more's the pity—that last, I mane; it's well enough for the likes of me to lave it; I could do it no good. But, as to the gentry, the *sod* keeps them, and sure they might keep on the *sod*! Ye needn't be afraid of me, my lady; I scorn to disgrace my country; I'm not afraid of my

character, or work—it's all I have to be proud of in the wide world."

How much more respect does this beget in every right-thinking mind, than the mean attempt to conceal a fact of which we all, as well as poor Biddy, have a right to be proud! The greatest hero in the world was unfortunate, but he was not less a hero; the most highly favoured country in the world has been in the same predicament, but it is not less a great country.

Biddy's reply, however, to any one in an inferior grade of society, is very different.

"Is it Irish?—to be sure I am. Do ye think I'm going to deny my country, God bless it! Throth and it's myself that is, and proud of that same. Irish! what else would I be, I wonder?"

Poor Biddy! her life has been one long-drawn scene of incessant, almost heart-rending labour. From the time she was eight years old, she earned her own bread; and any, ignorant of the wild spirit-springing outbursts of glee, that might almost be termed "the Irish epidemic," would wonder how it was that Biddy retained her habitual cheerfulness, to say nothing of the hearty laughter she indulges in of an evening, and the Irish jig she treats the servants to at the kitchen Christmas merry-making.

Last Christmas, indeed, Biddy was not so gay as usual. Our pretty housemaid had for two or three years made it a regular request that Biddy should put *her own* wedding ring in the kitchen pudding—I do not know why, for Jessie never had the luck to find it in her division. But so it was. A merry night is Christmas eve in our cheerful English homes—The cook puffed out with additional importance, weighing her ingredients according to rule, for "a one-pound or two-pound pudding;" surveying her larded turkey, and pronouncing upon the relative merits of the sirloin which is to be "roast for the parlour," and "the ribs" that are destined for the kitchen; although she has a great deal to do, like all English cooks she is in a most sweet temper, because there is a great deal to eat; and she exults over the "dozens" of mince pies, the soup, the savoury fish, the huge bundles of celery, and the rotund barrel of oysters, in a manner that must be seen to be understood. The housemaid is equally busy in her department. The groom smuggles in the mistletoe, which the old butler slyly suspends from one of the bacon hooks in the ceiling, and then kisses the cook beneath. The green-grocer's boy gets well rated for not bringing "red berries on all the holly." The evening is wound up with potatoes, "pottle deep," of ale and hot elderberry wine, and a loud cheer echoes through the house when the clock strikes twelve. Poor must the family be, who have not a few pounds of meat, a few loaves of bread, and a few shillings, to distribute amongst some old pensioners on Christmas eve.

In our small household, Biddy has been a positive necessary for many Christmas days, and as many Christmas eves. She was never told to come—it was an understood thing. Biddy rang the gate bell every twenty-fourth of December, at six o'clock, and even the English cook returned her national salutation of "God save all here," with cordiality.

Jessie, as I have said, is her great ally; I am sure she has found her at least a score of husbands, in the *tea cups*, in as many months.

The morning of last Christmas eve, however, Biddy came not. Six o'clock, seven o'clock, eight o'clock, and the maids were not up.

"How did they know the hour?—Biddy never rang." The house was in a state of commotion. The cook declaring, bit by bit, "that she knew how it would *hend*!—it was *halfways* the way with them *Hirish*. Oh, dirty, ungrateful!—very pretty! Who was to eat the copper, or boil the *am*, or see after the *sallery*, or butter the tins, or *old* the pudding cloth?"—while Jessie whimpered, "or drop the ring in the kitchen pudding!"

Instead of the clattering domestic bustle of old Christmas, every one looked sulky, and, as usual when a household is not astir in the early morning, every thing went wrong. I got out of temper myself, and, resolved if possible never to speak to a servant when angry, I put on my furs, and set forth to see what had become of my poor industrious countrywoman.

She lived at the corner of Gore Lane!—the St Giles's of our respectable parish of Kensington; and when I entered her little room—which, by the way, though never orderly, was always clean—Biddy, who had been sitting over the embers

of the fire, instead of sending the beams of her countenance to greet me, turned away, and burst into tears.

This was unexpected, and the ire which had in some degree arisen at the disappointment that had disturbed the house, vanished altogether. I forgot to say that Biddy had been happily relieved from the blight of a drunken husband about six years ago, and laboured to support three little children without ever having entertained the remotest idea of sending them to the parish.

She had "her families," for whom she washed at their own houses, and at over hours "took in" work at her small cottage.

To assist in this, and also from motives of charity, she employed a young girl distinguished by the name of Louisa, whom she preserved from worse than death. This creature she found *starving*; and although she brought fever amongst her children, and her preserver lost much employment in consequence, Biddy "saw her through the sickness, and, by the goodness of Almighty God, would be nothing the worse or the poorer for having befriended a motherless child."

Those who bestow from the treasures of their abundance, deserve praise; but those who, like the poor Irish Washerwoman, bestow half of their daily bread, and suffer the needy to shelter beneath their roof, deserve blessings.

The cause of Biddy's absence, and the cause of Biddy's tears, I will endeavour to repeat in her own words:—

"I come home last night, as usual, more dead than alive, until I got sitting down with the childre; for, having put two or three potatoes, as usual, my lady, to heat, just on the bar, I thought, tired as I was, I'd iron out the few small things 'Loo' had put in blue, particularly a clane cap and handkercher, and the aprons for to-day, as yer honor likes to see me nice; and the boy got a prize at school; for, let me do as I would, I took care they should have the *education* that makes the poor rich. Well, I noticed that Loo's hair was hanging in ringlets down her face, and I says to her, 'My honey,' I says, 'if Annie was you, and she's my own, I'd make her put up her hair plain; the way her Majesty wears it is good enough, I should think, for such as you, Louisa;' and with that she says, 'It might do for Annie; but for her part, *her mother was a tradeswoman*.' Well, I bit my tongue to hinder myself from hurting her feelings by telling her *what* her mother was, for the *blush of shame is the only one that misbecomes a woman's cheek*.

But I waited till our work was over, and, *picking her out the two meaty potatoes*, and sharing, as I always did, my half pint of beer with her, when I had it, I reasoned with her, as I often did before; and looking to where my three sleeping childre lay, little Jemmy's cheek *blooming like a rose*, on his prize book, which he took into bed with him, I called God to witness, that though nature, like, would draw my heart more to my own flesh and blood, yet I'd see to her as I would to them.

She made me no answer, but put the potatoes aside, and said, 'Mother, go to bed.' I let her call me mother,' continued Biddy, 'it's such a sweet sound, and hinders one, *when one has it to call*, from feeling lonesome in the world; it's the shelter for many a breaking heart, and the home of many a wild one; ould as I am, I miss my mother still! 'Louisa,' I says, 'I've heard my own childre their prayers—kneel down, a'lanna, there, and get over them.'

'My throat's so sore,' she says, 'I can't say 'em out. Don't ye see I could not eat the potatoes?' This was about half past twelve, and I had spoke to the po-lis to give me a call at five. But when I woke, the grey of the morning was in the room with me; and knowing where I ought to have been, I hustled on my things, and hearing a po-lis below the window (we know them by the steady tramp they have, as if they'd rather go slow than fast), I says, 'If you please, what's the clock, and why didn't you call me?' 'It's half past seven,' he says; 'and sure the girl, when she went out at half past five, said you war up.'

'My God!—what girl?' I says, turning all over like a *corpse*; and then I missed my bonnet and shawl, and saw my box empty; she had even taken the book from under the child's cheek. But that wasn't all. I'd have forgiven her for the loss of the clothes, and the tears she forced from the eyes of my innocent child; I'd forgive her for making my heart grow ould in half an hour, than it had grown in its whole life before; but my *wedding ring*, ma'am!—her head had often this shoulder for its pillow, and I'd throw this arm over her, so. Oh, ma'am darlint, could you believe it?—she stole my

wedding ring aff my hand—the hand that had saved and slaved for her! The ring! oh, many's the tear I've shed on it; and many a time, when I've been next to starving, and it has glittered in my eyes, I've been tempted to part with it, but I couldn't. It had grown thin, *like myself*, with the hardship of the world; and yet when I'd look at it twisting on my poor wrinkled finger, I'd think of the times gone by, of him who had put it on, and *would* have kept his promise but for the temptation of drink, and what it lades to; and those times, when throuble would be crushing me into the earth, I'd think of what I heard onct—that a ring was a thing like eternity, having no beginning nor end; and I'd turn it, and turn it, and turn it! and find comfort in *believing* that the little penance here was nothing in comparison to that without a beginning or an end that we war to go to hereafter—it might be in heaven, or it might (God save us!) be in the other place; and," said poor Biddy, "I drew a dale of consolation from *that*, and she knew it—she, the sarpint, that I shared my children's food with—she knew it, and, while I slept the *heavy sleep of hard labour*, she had the heart to rob me!—to rob me of the only treasure (barring the childre) I had in the world! I'm a great sinner; I can't say, God forgive her; nor I can't work; and it's put me apast doing my duty; and Jessie, the craythur, laid ever so much store by it, on account of the little innocent charrums; and, altogether, it's the sorest Christmas day that ever came to me. Oh, sure, I wouldn't have that girl's heart in my breast for a goodlen crown—the ingratitude of her bates the world!"

It really was a case of the most hardened ingratitude I had ever known—the little wretch! to rob the only friend she ever had, while sleeping in the very bed where she had been tended, and tendered, and cared for, so unceasingly. "She might take all I had in the world, if she had only left me *that*," she repeated continually, while rocking herself backwards and forwards over the fire, after the fashion of her country; "the thrifle of money, the rags, and the child's book—all—and I'd have had a *clane breast*. I could forgive her from my heart, but I can't forgive her for taking my ring—for taking my wedding ring!"

This was not all. The girl was traced and captured; and the same day Biddy was told she must go to Queen-square to identify the prisoner.

"Me," she exclaimed, "who never was in the place of the law before, what can I say but that she tuck it?"

An Irish cause always creates a sensation in a police-office. The magistrates smile at each other, the reporter cuts his pencil and arranges his note-book, and the clerk covers the lower part of his face with his hand, to conceal the expression that plays around his mouth.

Biddy's curtesy—a genuine Irish dip—and her opening speech, which she commenced by wishing their honours a merry Christmas and plenty of them, and that they might have the power of doing good to the end of their days, and never meet with ingratitude for that same," was the only absurdity connected with her deposition.

When she saw the creature with whom her heart had dwelt so long, in the custody of the police, she was completely overcome, and intermingled her evidence with so many entreaties that mercy should be shown the hardened delinquent, that the magistrate was sensibly affected. Short as was the time that had elapsed between Louisa's elopement and discovery, she had spent the money and pawned the ring; and twenty hands at least were extended to the Irish Washerwoman with money to redeem the pledge.

Poor Biddy had never been so rich before in all her life; but that did not console her for the sentence passed upon her protégé, and it was a long time before she was restored to her usual spirits. She flagged and pined; and when the spring began to advance a little, and the sun to shine, her misery became quite troublesome, her continual wail being "for the poor sinful craythur who was shut up among stone walls, and would be sure to come out worse than she went in!"

The old cook lived to grow thoroughly ashamed of the reproaches she cast on Biddy, and Jessie shows her off on all occasions as a specimen of an Irish Washerwoman.

QUICK SENSES OF THE ARAB.—Their eyesight is peculiarly sharp and keen. Almost before I could on the horizon discern more than a moving speck, my guides would detect a stranger, and distinguish upon a little nearer approach, by his garb and appearance, the tribe to which he belonged.—*Wellsted's City of the Caliphs*.